

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Propertyhistoric name Caldwell United States Post Officeother names/site number Same**2. Location**street & number 14 North Main Street☐ not for publicationcity, town Caldwell☐ vicinitystate Kansas

code

KScounty Sumner

code

191zip code 67022**3. Classification**

Ownership of Property

- ☐ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☒ public-Federal

Category of Property

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

Noncontributing

 buildings sites structures objects1 Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

Kansas Post Offices that contain Treasury
Department Section Artwork, 1936-1942Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 0**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this
☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Ramon Powers State Historic Preservation OfficerDecember 16, 1988
Date

Signature of certifying official

Kansas State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National
Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government: Post Office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government: Post Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

20th Century Revival: Classical
Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Metal: Copper

other Stone: Limestone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Caldwell United States Post Office (c. 1939-1940) is located at 14 North Main Street in Caldwell, Summer County, Kansas (pop. 1,401). The one-story, ridge hipped roof, red brick building has a western facade orientation. The building measures approximately sixty feet from north to south and sixty feet from east to west. A double door pierces the center of the building's facade, a classical surround accentuates the doorway. Steps lead up to the doorway. Two pairs of large, multi-paned windows surmounted by limestone lintels and underscored by limestone sills flank the doorway. Five windows of similar treatment pierce the north and south elevation of the building. Copper roofing still covers the roof and a wooden cupola marks the roof's center. The building stands on a raised foundation. This post office is an example of the smaller class C or D standardized design type that was repeated throughout the country during the 1930s.

The mural, "Cowboys Driving Cattle" was installed on the south wall of the Caldwell Post Office lobby above the postmaster's door and the two bulletin boards that flank it. This is the traditional location for Section artwork in the smaller class C and D type post offices. "Cowboys Driving Cattle" is a tempera mural that depicts cowboys on horseback driving cattle on the Chisholm Trail through the Coronado Buttes southwest of Caldwell. The action in the mural is focused on the foreground where three cowboys gallop toward two wild dogs that are attacking the tail end of the cattle herd. This confrontation occurs on a bluff overlooking a wide and shallow winding stream. The line of cattle continues down the bluff to the stream. Evett centrally divides the landscape with the stream and a cowboy. To the right of the canvas the focus is on several craggy rock outcropping and two cowboys. The colors on this half of the canvas are dusty clay and earth tones. The left half of the canvas is a cooler palette of greens and blues. The cattle congregate on this side. A raven perches on a dead tree in the foreground. Tall cypress trees stand in the distance. The symbolism employed through the raven, the dead tree, and the cypress trees is funerary or death on the desert, but the intent of the scene is more rooted in the difficulties of the trail.

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The mural measured 13' 11" by 4' 6" before installation and is surmounted by a cornice moulding. It sits atop the postmaster's door surround, rather than arching around it. The mural was installed on August 8, 1941. In August, 1973 the mural's condition was assessed as good and remains as such. According to current information the mural has not been restored.

A varnished wooden vestibule projects into the lobby, cutting off some view of the mural. This is a traditional design feature found in most of the post offices included in this nomination. The floors and wainscoting retain their original marble. The postmaster's door and bulletin boards retain their varnished wood surrounds. The original hanging light fixtures have been replaced with almost mounted fluorescent lights.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☒ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Art

Politics/Government

Social History

Period of Significance

1941

1941

1941

Significant Dates

1941

1941

1941

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Evett, Kenneth: Artist

Simon, Louis: Architect

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Caldwell United States Post Office (c. 1939-1940) is being nominated to the National Register as part of the Kansas Post Office Artwork (1936-1942) Thematic Resources nomination at the local and state levels of significance under criteria A and C for its historical association with the Treasury Department's Section program and for the artistic significance of the mural that it contains. The mural, "Cowboys Driving Cattle", was painted by Colorado artist Kenneth Evett (1913-?) in 1941. Because the mural is less than fifty years old, criteria consideration G, which allows for exceptional significance in the case of properties achieving significance within the past fifty years, is also a factor. The National Register has identified post offices containing Section artwork as being exceptionally significant if they retain integrity from their period of significance.

"Cowboys Driving Cattle" is a tempera mural that depicts cowboys on horseback driving cattle on the Chisholm Trail through the Coronado Buttes southwest of Caldwell, Kansas. More than one thousand cattle trampled through Caldwell during the heyday of the trail, 1872-1875, on their way from Texas to eastern markets; additionally, much freight was hauled south to Texas on the trail. Caldwell was the first place along the trail where cattle could be shipped to points north by rail. Evett has taken an event which is historically important to the community, capturing the landscape and the sense of the journey along the trail. "Cowboys Driving Cattle" is done in the western illustrative manner, much like a Zane Grey illustration, and is an example of the historically based, illustrative realism that was funded under the Section program.

Evett, who became a Cornell University art professor, was interviewed by the Smithsonian Institution about his work under the Section and the W.P.A. programs in 1964. Evett started painting in 1933, studying under Thomas Hart Benton in 1935 and also at various schools. He entered "practically every available competition that came along and in no time at all even though God knows we weren't ready for it, we were painting

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murals." He received the Caldwell commission as a result of an honorable mention in a Section competition. Park and Markowitz write that Evett was not really interested in painting the Chisholm Trail scene because it was historical, but the Caldwell postmaster persisted and prevailed. Of the mural Evett says "I painted a picture in tempera on canvas of some Leonardesque horses galloping across the prairie with romantic cowboys and a river and a totally romantic concept of Western light and space. I'd really like to see it again. It might not be as bad in some ways as I think it was."

Evett received the commission for the mural on January 10, 1941, the mural was installed on August 8, 1941. "Cowboys Driving Cattle" was installed on the south wall of the Caldwell Post Office lobby above the postmaster's door and the two bulletin boards that flank it. It measured 13' x" by 4' 6" before installation and runs flush across the top of the door surround. Evett received \$700 for the commission. Evett is also credited with the Section murals for the Horton, Kansas, Golden, Colorado, and Pawnee City, Nebraska post offices. The Caldwell Post Office is an example of one of the many smaller class C or D type post offices that received Section artwork in Kansas.

Please see the Kansas Post Office Artwork (1936-1942) Thematic Resources cover nomination for additional information.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Falk, Peter Hastings. Who Was Who in American Art. (Madison, CT: Soundview Press, 1985).

General Services Administration. Treasury Department Section Records - Kansas Post Offices. Caldwell, Kansas.

National Archives. Public Building Services (GR 121), Correspondence with Artists (Series 126), Caldwell, Kansas.

Park, Marlene and Gerald Markowitz. Democratic Vistas. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984).

Svedlow, Dr. Anthony V. (Mulvane Gallery, Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas). Personal interview with Martha Hagedorn-Krass, January 8, 1988.

☒ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository:

Kansas State Historical Society

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than 1 acre.

UTM References

A 14 623765 4099220
Zone Easting Northing

C

B
Zone Easting Northing

D

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located on lots 100, 102, 104, 106, 108, 110; Block 28, Caldwell, Kansas. The property is bounded to the west by North Main Street, to the north and east by adjacent property lines, and to the south by adjacent property lines.

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire parcel that is historically associated with the property.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Martha Hagedorn-Krass, Architectural Historian

organization Kansas State Historical Society date December 16, 1988

street & number 120 W. 10th telephone 913-296-5264

city or town Topeka state Kansas zip code 66612

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Trovato, Joseph. Interview with Kenneth Evett at Cornell University,
October 10, 1964. (The Oral History Collections of Archives of
American Art. Smithsonian Institution).

Wichita Eagle-Beacon, 21 May 1972.

Wyckoff, Gale. Postmaster, Caldwell United States Post Office. Letter
to Martha Hagedorn, 16 April 1987.

CALDWELL UNITED
STATES POST OFFICE
CALDWELL, KANSAS
(CALDWELL QUAD)³
UTM COORDINATES
14 623 765
4099220
4099

